

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-02 H-02 /018 W

----- 038871

R 040430Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4499

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CPRS, SN

SUBJECT: EXPULSION OF REVEREND ROBERT FERGUSON FROM SINGAPORE

REF: STATE 020608

1. SEVERAL DAYS PRIOR TO RECEIPT OF REFTEL REVEREND SEAWARD (A FORMER COLLEAGUE OF REVEREND FERGUSON) CALLED ON VICE CONSUL AND CLAIMED THAT SINGAPORE IMMIGRATION HAD PROMISED REVEREND FERGUSON THAT IT WOULD SEND HIM A LETTER EXPLAINING THAT HIS EXPULSION FROM SINGAPORE (WHICH WAS RECINDED ONLY A FEW HOURS BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE) WAS A MISTAKE. SEAWARD ASKED IF EMBASSY HAD RECEIVED SUCH A LETTER AND WAS INFORMED THAT EMBASSY HAD RECEIVED NOTHING IN WRITING FROM THE GOS ON REVEREND FERGUSON.

2. ON JANUARY 23 DCM REFERRED TO SEAWARD'S CALL DURING INFORMAL CONVERSATION WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY MFA, TAN BOON SENG, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT GOS WOULD SEND A LETTER TO FERGUSON WHICH WOULD SERVE TO CLEAR FERGUSON OF ANY POSSIBLE SUSPICION THAT THE GOS BELIEVED HE HAD ENGAGED IN MISCONDUCT WHILE IN SINGAPORE. TAN SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO IT. SINCE REFTEL RECEIVED, TAN HAS BEEN UNAVAILABLE AND WILL BE OUT-OF-TOWN UNTIL FEBRUARY 12. ON JANUARY 28 CONSUL PETERSON CALLED A SENIOR IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL, MR. FREDERICK SABAPATHY, AND URGED IMMIGRATION OFFICE TO ISSUE A STATEMENT. IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL INTIMATED HIS OFFICE HAD MADE A SERIOUS MISTAKE IN THE CASE, BUT BLANDLY IGNORED QUESTION OF SENDING A LETTER.

3. ALTHOUGH DCM WILL APPROACH TAN BOON SENG AGAIN ON THIS

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MATTER WHEN HE RETURNS TO SINGAPORE, EMBASSY IS DOUBTFUL

WHETHER GOS WILL BE WILLING TO PUT ANYTHING IN WRITING WHICH WOULD INDICATE THAT IT HAS MADE A MISTAKE. IT IS PROBABLY UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT ANY ASIAN GOVERNMENT TO DO MORE THAN ADMIT INFORMALLY THAT IT HAS MADE A MAJOR ERROR IN A CASE OF THIS KIND. THEREFORE, WHILE WE WILL MAKE ONE MORE EFFORT, WE THINK ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CHURCH MAY HAVE TO BE SATISFIED WITH LETTER FROM DEPARTMENT.

4. IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES HAVE ADVISED CONSUL INFORMALLY THAT FERGUSON CASE WILL NOT IN ANY WAY PREJUDICE WORK PERMIT APPLICATION FOR REPLACEMENT. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT NO PRELIMINARY GUARANTEES WILL BE GIVEN AND THAT ALL APPLICATIONS FOR WORK PERMITS WILL CONTINUE TO BE PROCESSED ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS WITH APPROVAL DEPENDENT UPON A GENUINE NEED FOR SERVICES OF FOREIGN NATIONAL.

5. REVEREND DOWDY IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON JANUARY 30 STATED THAT THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD LOCAL CHURCH COUNCIL INFORMED HER THAT WORK PERMIT APPLICATION HAD BEEN DISAPPROVED ON GROUNDS THAT HER POSITION IS EXCESS TO INFORMAL PERSONNEL "QUOTA" ALLOWED ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CHURCH OF SINGAPORE. SHE NOTED THAT FERGUSON'S REPLACEMENT WOULD BE WITHIN "QUOTA," BUT THAT HER ASSIGNMENT TO SINGAPORE HAD REPRESENTED A NEW POSITION- ONE WHICH SHE ALLEGES IS ESSENTIALLY REGIONAL IN CHARACTER. FYI- REVEREND SEAWARD COMMENTED TO VICE CONSUL BIDDICK THAT SENIOR SINGAPOREAN LAY LEADER IN ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IS PERSONALLY SENSITIVE TO ASSIGNMENT OF FOREIGN NATIONALS TO LOCAL CHURCH. END FYI.

6. IT IS EXPECTED THAT NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN TO REQUIRE REVEREND DOWDY'S DEPARTURE BEFORE FERGUSON'S REPLACEMENT ARRIVES. MEANWHILE, EMBASSY HAS OFFERED TO ASSIST IN ANY APPROPRIATE WAY TO EXTEND HER STAY.
HOLDRIDGE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SINGAP00560
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760041-0829
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760282/aaaacuno.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 20608
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUN 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <02 JUN 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EXPULSION OF REVEREND ROBERT FERGUSON FROM SINGAPORE
TAGS: CPRS, SN, (FERGUSON, ROBERT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006